

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMSRECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER

DEC 21 2006

1) (Currently Amended): A system for manufacturing containers, comprising a supporting structure, the system being composed entirely of parts associated with the supporting structure, including:

a forming sector supplied, by a feed station, with a continuous strip of forming material, comprising at least a paper material, used in preparation of at least one blank from which to fashion a respective container, and establishing a first leg of a feed path followed by the material, ~~the forming material comprises at least a paper material;~~

a transfer device operating downstream of the forming sector, serving to distance the forming material from the forming sector and establishing a second leg of the feed path followed by the material; and

a shaping sector operating downstream of the forming sector, by which each blank emerging from the sector is folded and caused ultimately by means of a fixing operation to assume the shape of the container produced by the folding step, the shaping sector establishing a third leg of the feed path followed by the forming material;

a traction device operating by direct interaction with the forming material at a point downstream of the feed station;

at least one tensioning device, operating upstream of the traction device and in such a manner that the segment of forming material extending downstream of the selfsame device is subjected to a predetermined longitudinal tension, in order to facilitate certain operations carried out along the first leg;

a finishing device, operating between the tensioning device and the traction device, associated with the feed station and designed to operate on at least one bonding edge of the advancing forming material in such a way

that the bonding edge of the single blank is bent double along its length and rendered suitable for positioning on the inside of the relative container;

the first leg of the feed path extending substantially parallel to a longitudinal dimension of the supporting structure;

the second leg of the feed path extending transversely to the first leg;

the third leg of the feed path extending substantially parallel to the first leg and transversely to the second leg; and

the first, second and third legs being disposed in such a manner that the forming material will follow a feed path extending externally of the supporting structure at least in part, and presenting substantially a C-shaped configuration by which the supporting structure is circumscribed at least in part.

2) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 1, wherein the forming sector and the shaping sector are arranged in line operationally, so that the path followed by the forming material when advancing between the forming sector and the shaping sector is substantially linear.

3) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 2, wherein the shaping sector comprises at least two substantially parallel shaping lines onto which the forming material emerging from the forming sector is directed.

Claims 4-5 (Cancelled)

6) (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 3, wherein the forming sector comprises:

a the feed station supplying the forming material;

a cutting station operating downstream of the feed station, by which the forming material is divided into a succession of discrete lengths each constituting a respective blank;

a scoring station operating downstream of the feed station, by which at least one crease line is applied to each length of forming material constituting a blank; and

a preforming station operating downstream of the feed station, by which the forming material is bent initially along the crease line.

7) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 6, wherein the feed station comprises at least one main supply reel carrying a coiled continuous strip of the forming material and rotatable about a respective longitudinal axis in such a way that the continuous strip of forming material can be decoiled.

8) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 7, wherein the feed station comprises at least one auxiliary supply reel carrying a further continuous strip of the forming material that can be spliced to the continuous strip of the main reel to guarantee continuity of the supply of forming material, each supply reel being replaceable, on final depletion of the relative forming material, with a further reel carrying a fresh supply of the forming material.

9) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 6, wherein the first leg of the feed path followed by the forming material is established by a plurality of guide elements constituting part of the feed station.

10) (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 7, ~~further comprising a~~ wherein the traction device, operating by direct interaction with the forming

material at a point downstream of the feed station, and ~~serving~~ serves to decoil the selfsame material from the relative supply reel.

11) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 10, wherein the traction device comprises a pair of pinch rolls, positioned mutually tangential and establishing a passage through which the forming material is directed, including at least one roll that can be power driven in rotation to the end of advancing the forming material through the passage of the device.

12) (Cancelled)

13) (Currently Amended) A system as in claim ~~42~~ 1, wherein the tensioning device comprises at least one pair of pinch rolls, positioned mutually tangential and establishing a passage through which the forming material is directed, including at least one roll subjected to a braking action when in rotation in such a way as to tension the forming material advancing through passage of the device.

14) (Currently Amended) A system as in claim ~~42~~ 1, comprising at least one sterilizing device operating along the feed path followed by the forming material and serving to debacterialize the selfsame material.

15) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 14, wherein the sterilizing device operates on the forming material at a point between the tensioning device and the traction device.

16) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 1, wherein the scoring station is positioned to operate at a point along the feed path followed by the forming material, between the feed station and the cutting station.

17) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 16, wherein the scoring station comprises at least one press presenting mutually opposed dies offered to the two faces of the forming material, capable of alternating between an idle position in which the dies are distanced from the forming material interposed between them, and an operating position in which they are brought together forcibly against the forming material in such a way as to generate the crease line.

18) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 17, wherein the cutting station comprises at least one blade positioned to operate in close proximity to the scoring station in such a way that the forming material can be cut immediately adjacent to the press, capable of alternating between an idle position distanced from the forming material, and an operating position of engagement with the selfsame material, in which a blank is separated.

19) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 18, wherein the blade of the cutting station can be timed to alternate between the idle position and the operating position synchronously with the movement of the press of the scoring station between the relative idle position and operating position, in such a manner that the press of the scoring station and the blade of the cutting station are made to engage the advancing forming material simultaneously.

20) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 1, wherein the transfer device comprises at least one gripper element serving to take up each blank of forming material released from the cutting station, and capable of movement along the second leg of the feed path between the cutting station and the shaping sector to the end of advancing each successive blank.

21) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 6, wherein the preforming station operates at a point on the second leg of the feed path downstream of the cutting station, in such a manner as to initiate a bend in the length of forming material constituting each blank along the relative crease line generated by the scoring station.

Claims 22-23 (Cancelled)

24) (Currently Amended) A system as in claim ~~23~~ 1, wherein the finishing device comprises: seam-folding means by which the bonding edge is bent double along its length in such a way that the bonding edge of each blank will present a treated portion directed toward the inside of the relative container; also fixing means by which to secure the bonding edge in the bent configuration.

25) (Currently Amended) A system as in claim ~~23~~ 1, wherein the finishing device comprises application means by which to lay a fillet of treated material over the raw edge of the advancing material, so that the bonding edge of each blank will be covered by a layer of material suitable for positioning on the inside of the relative container.

26) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 1, wherein the shaping sector comprises: a folding station at which each blank is bent along the crease lines in such a way as to take on the shape of the container being manufactured, and a sealing or welding station located downstream of the folding station, where each blank is secured in the configuration presented on emerging from the folding station to assume the definitive shape of the relative container.

27) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 26, wherein the sealing or welding station comprises at least one sealer or welder such as will fix each blank in the definitive configuration of the manufactured container.

28) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 27, further comprising an assembly station operating between the folding station and the sealing or welding station and serving to apply at least one neck to each folded blank emerging from the folding station, wherein each neck is fixed to the folded blank at the sealing or welding station through the agency of the sealer or welder.

29) (Previously Amended) A system as in claim 1, further comprising feed means associated with the supporting structure and serving to guarantee the movement of the forming material between the stations of the system, wherein such means comprise the transfer device and cause the forming material to pass from one station to the next substantially at a predetermined and uniform time.

Claims 30-39 (Cancelled)